

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-13 have been canceled, without prejudice.

14. (New) Continuous strip of containers wherein:

the containers are distributed stepwise one after another according to a longitudinal axis of the strip, two adjacent containers being separated by a step;

said strip of containers has at least one longitudinal edge zone from which traction pins protrude laterally, said pins being intended to interact in use by contact with an advancing device for advancing the strip;

said strip comprises, for each traction pin, at least one corresponding opposing projection that protrudes from the opposite side of the longitudinal edge zone.

15. (New) Strip according to claim 14, wherein said strip is intended to be conveyed along an advancing direction parallel to a longitudinal axis of said strip and each opposing projection is located further forward in relation to said advancing direction, compared with the relative traction pin, at an axial distance that is shorter than said step between the containers.

16. (New) Strip according to claim 15, wherein the axial distance between the opposing projection, located further forward, and the relative traction pin, located further back, is shorter than half said step between the containers.

17. (New) Strip according to claim 14, wherein said strip comprises, for each container, at least one traction pin and at least one corresponding opposing projection.

18. (New) Strip according to claim 14, wherein both said traction pins and said opposing projections, are distributed with a step that is equal to said step between the containers.

19. (New) Strip according to claim 14, wherein the edge of said strip is configured in a sinuous manner in such a way that the longitudinal edge zone alternates, with a step that is equal to said step between the containers, a full zone occupied by the material of said strip and an empty zone that is free of the material of said strip.

20. (New) Strip according to claim 19, wherein each traction pin, and each relative opposing projection are both situated in the same full zone.

21. (New) Strip according to claim 19 wherein each full zone has a traction pin and the relative opposing projection.

22. (New) Method of advancing by means of an advancing device a strip of containers in which the containers are arranged one after another separated by a step according to a longitudinal axis of the strip, said strip having at least one longitudinal edge zone from which protrude laterally traction pins, for each traction pin, at least one corresponding opposing projection protruding from the opposite side of the longitudinal edge zone is provided, said being traction pins intended to interact in use by contact with said advancing device, wherein said advancing device comprises:

an advancing guide for advancing said strip extending in length according to an advancing direction that is parallel to the longitudinal axis of said strip, said advancing guide being defined laterally by two running surfaces that are parallel to each other and are provided to contain the longitudinal edge zone of said strip;

at least one dragging member prearranged to push the strip of the containers forward, which member is movable in a direction parallel to the advancing

direction and has one or more thrust elements prearranged to interact by contact with the traction pins;

wherein said method comprises bringing a traction pin into contact with said thrust element, making the opposing projection associated with the pin to interact by contact with said running surface facing the projection so as to oppose the flexure of the strip of containers due to the action of the thrust element.

23. (New) Method according to claim 22, wherein each opposing projection is located slightly forward, in relation to said advancing direction, compared with the relative traction pin, at a distance that is not shorter than the width of said advancing guide.

24. (New) Method according to claim 22, wherein the width of said advancing guide, i.e. the distance between said two running surfaces, is substantially equal or slightly greater than the distance, considered in a direction that is perpendicular to the advancing direction, between the side ends of a traction pin and of the relative opposing projection.